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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum



THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 0600

27 FEBRUARY 1965

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
27 February 1965

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam as of 0600 EST

Communist Political Developments

1. Premier Kosygin, in his 26 February report on his Asian mission, reaffirmed Moscow's pledge of "necessary assistance" to North Vietnam and announced that the Soviet-DRV agreement on measures to "safeguard the security and strengthen the defense potential" of North Vietnam is being implemented. He sought to exploit concern over the possibility of escalation by warning that if US "aggressive actions" continue, the Vietnam conflict "will eventually transcend its original boundaries." However, he avoided any implication that Soviet forces might become involved in such a contingency.

2. Kosygin's guarded comments on the possibility of negotiations were designed to avoid open divergence with Hanoi and Peiping, and to stimulate further initiatives by foreign governments toward negotiations. Although he refrained from endorsing any specific proposal, Kosygin voiced the desire of "peace-loving countries" for an Indochina solution "at the conference table." [redacted] he set forth only one precondition--that US "aggressive actions" against North Vietnam be ended in order to "create conditions for the exploration of avenues leading to the normalization of the situation in Indochina."

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3. Kosygin repeated standard demands for the withdrawal of US forces from both South Vietnam and South Korea, but did not pose this as a prerequisite to negotiations.

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4. Kosygin also reiterated the Soviet concept of a political settlement. He contended that South Vietnamese of "different political convictions" are united in "seeking to end foreign intervention, to create in South Vietnam a national coalition government that would follow a policy of independence, democracy, peace and neutrality." This formula conveys Soviet interest in a settlement on the Laotian pattern and is probably intended as a cautious endorsement of French views.

5. No major propaganda pronouncements on the Vietnamese situation have been issued by Peiping or Hanoi during the past 24 hours.

Communist Military Developments

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8. Photoreconnaissance of 24 February revealed the continued presence of a regiment of jet fighters at Kunming airfield in Southwest China. This indicates that the additional MIG fighters detected at Mengtzu airfield on 14 February--65 versus a previous complement of 37--were not deployed from Kunming, but from some other field in South China or possibly from further north,

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Political Developments in South Vietnam

10. General Thi's efforts to make himself South Vietnam's new strong man are causing alarm in some military circles. 25X1

13. In another recent development, a group calling itself the "Struggle for Peace Force" has been formed by some politicians in Saigon. Its goals reportedly are a ceasefire and an international conference on Vietnam. Police, [redacted] prevented it from holding a news conference two days ago. A peaceful demonstration in Saigon yesterday by about 100 students calling for an end to the war may have been sponsored by the new organization, however. A four point manifesto of the "Movement for Peace" calling for the withdrawal of Viet Cong and US forces from South Vietnam and the establishment of a

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committee to reunify Vietnam was issued today in Saigon. The manifesto was signed by Quang Lien, the second-ranking member of the Buddhist Institute.

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Viet Cong Military Activity

15. No significant new Viet Cong military actions have been reported, but there are continuing signs of erosion of government control in the northern provinces. Officials in Quang Nam Province are reportedly discouraged over their inability to defend "secure hamlets against superior Viet Cong forces. One district chief claims that, since the end of the Tet ceasefire three weeks ago, he has lost control over 16 villages. In northwest Kontum Province about 1,000 tribesmen and a company of regional forces were moved early this month into a town from the surrounding countryside.

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17. According to information from DIA, MACV now has evidence of at least 2,854 additional infiltrators since its last report of 31 October 1964. About 1,000 of these are believed to be natives of North Vietnam. Added to the previous estimate for the first seven months of 1964 of 4,708 infiltrators (3,976 confirmed), estimated infiltration in 1964 is 7,562, about one-half of whom were native-born northerners.

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